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Steve Heminger
Executive Director

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Deputy Executive Director, Policy

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Deputy Executive Director, Operations

Policy Advisory Council

May 12, 2010

Minutes

Metropolitan Transportation Commission Chair Scott Haggerty called the meeting to order at 1:43 p.m.

Members in attendance were Naomi Armenta, Cathleen Baker, Paul Branson, Richard Burnett, Carlos Castellanos, Andrew Casteel, Bena Chang, Wilbert Din, Ann Hancock, Richard Hedges, Allison Hughes, Randi Kinman, Federico Lopez, Marshall Loring, Evelina Molina, Cheryl O'Connor, Kendal Oku, Carmen Rojas, Lori Reese-Brown, Gerald Rico, Frank Robertson, Linda Jeffery Sailors, Dolly Sandoval, Egon Terplan, and Abigail Thorne-Lyman. Joanne Busenbark and Dolores Jaquez were excused.

MTC Commissioners Tom Azumbrado, Tom Bates, Dean Chu, Chris Daly, Dorene Giacopini, Scott Haggerty, Anne Halsted, Steve Kinsey, Jake Mackenzie, Amy Rein Worth, and Jim Spering were also in attendance.

Policy Advisory Council Work Plan

Executive Director Steve Heminger welcomed members and apologized for missing the first meeting. He thanked Commissioners for their attendance, and noted that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Council's Work Plan. He emphasized that the items on the Plan would be the decision of the Council. Mr. Heminger suggested two focus areas for the Council to potentially include in their Work Plan: the state-mandated Sustainable Communities Strategy and MTC's new Transit Sustainability Project (TSP).

Mr. Heminger introduced representatives from MTC's three previous advisory committees to present recommendations from their committees for inclusion in the Work Plan. Mr. Branson spoke on behalf of the Elderly and Disabled Advisory Committee, Mr. Castellanos spoke on behalf of the Minority Citizens Advisory Committee, and Mr. Hedges spoke on behalf of the MTC Advisory Council.

Chair Haggerty invited Commissioners to make recommendations or comments. Commissioner Spering noted the Council's important role in the work of the Commission, including the implementation of the RTP and the inclusion of rural counties in the discussion. He also said it was important to focus on the economic impacts of the Commission's decisions. Commissioner Kinsey noted the importance of climate change and the need to create transportation, land use and pricing policies that will affect change. Commissioner Daly said the Council would be key in pushing for change, helping coordinate with the community, and lobbying Commissioners. Commissioner Giacopini agreed with Commissioner Daly's comments and stressed the need for members to educate themselves about the needs of the communities they each represent.

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Policy Advisory Council Work Plan (Continued)

Commissioner Halsted agreed with the two main topics proposed by staff, and she noted the importance of defining key terms, such as social equity, and having the public participation plan defined before the start of these projects. She also commented that rather than dividing up into separate smaller discussion groups, an integrated approach would be more beneficial.

Commissioner Mackenzie suggested the process of transmitting the Council's advice to the Commission be clearly defined. Commissioner Bates concurred with Commissioners' comments regarding Council members acting as advocates and the need for an integrated approach, and he emphasized the importance of figuring out how to get more people to carpool, as well as creating fully accessible transit oriented development. Commissioner Rein Worth thanked members for their service and noted the importance of addressing the issues of equity and access. She also recommended that the Work Plan include a process for developing a unified voice to address the Commission.

Chair Haggerty invited members of the Council to voice their recommendations or comments. Ms. Hancock noted that many of the items on staff's potential work plan are symptoms; she is interested in addressing the causes in order to affect real change. Ms. Hancock is interested in looking at things from a systems point of view and identifying the key drivers of change, and she invited other members of the Council to participate. Mr. Hedges noted there are some simple ways of improving coordination of the Bay Area transit system. Ms. Reese-Brown commented that the community is not knowledgeable of the policy-making process at the regional level, and noted the importance of coordinating regional and local policy. Ms. Molina commented that Council members need to have a clear understanding of the funding framework. Mr. Casteel noted that improving data collection and an integrated performance assessment is important.

Mr. Branson said social equity must be integrated into the Transit Sustainability Project. Mr. Heminger responded that staff's definition of sustainability is within the Three E framework; to maximize economy, environment and equity and not choose one over the other. Ms. Jeffrey Sailors commented that Council members need a better understanding of how our transit system actually works when discussing the idea of consolidation. Mr. Terplan encouraged the group to remain as cohesive as possible and try to avoid dividing up into too many subcommittees. In addition to longer term, larger issues, he expressed interest in knowing what some of the Commission's day-to-day, smaller work plan topics are. Mr. Heminger emphasized that the two larger items he suggested were just a starting point to help form the agenda and issues the Council should consider.

Mr. Robertson stated accessibility, transparency and involvement in the community were key issues to keep in mind. Mr. Lopez suggested that the group avoid balkanization, focus on the larger picture and look at things as a whole. Ms. Rojas echoed Ms. Molina's comments about the need for members to understand the funding process. Ms. Kinman would like to see MTC become a leader in coordinating the issues of equity, parity, access and sustainability. She also noted the importance of having measurable goals and clear definitions. Commissioner Bates suggested that the Council focus on the Transit Sustainability Project because it is a project that is just beginning. Ms. Sandoval said it is important to identify topics to be covered through the Transit Sustainability Project.

Policy Advisory Council Work Plan (Continued)

Mr. Heminger suggested that staff distribute a list of the topics brought up during the meeting in order to facilitate adoption of the Work Plan at the June meeting.

Chair/Vice Chair Nominations

Ms. Grove announced that nominations were open for the Chair and Vice Chair positions of the Council. She noted that a decision would be made at a future Council meeting, and could be as early as next month. Ms. Hancock suggested that the Chair and Vice Chair be elected on an interim basis in order to allow time for members to get to know each other better; Mr. Lopez concurred. Ms. Rojas asked that the Chair's responsibilities be defined. Mr. Heminger responded that in addition to facilitating the meetings, the Chair provides a link between the Commission and the Council. Mr. Heminger suggested that the term and the candidates be determined at the June meeting. Mr. Din said it was important for the Chair to attend Commission meetings. Ms. Reese-Brown asked that the agenda-making process be defined, and Mr. Heminger responded the Chair would work with staff to create the agenda based on the work plan.

Mr. Branson, Ms. Reese-Brown, Ms. Jeffery Sailors and Ms. Sandoval were nominated for leadership. Mr. Heminger suggested that nominations remain open until the June meeting. He also said that the June meeting could focus on funding, at the Council's request. Ms. Rojas noted that a discussion of funding should not be separated from a discussion of how MTC prioritizes its spending in terms of planning. Mr. Spering said that in the discussion of funding, it is important for members to understand the challenges faced by operators. Mr. Casteel added that it would be useful for the nominees to know the role and responsibilities of the chair. Mr. Heminger noted staff will distribute that information. Ms. Molina asked that the flow of advice from the Council to the Commission and the methodology be clearly defined. Commissioner Giacomini suggested the Council might consider starting their meeting earlier in order to increase the possibility of Commissioner attendance.

There was no public comment. The next meeting is scheduled for June 9, 2010. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.